

The system of education needed is one that prepares young people to take responsibility for their continuing education, and to collaborate with one another so that their combined skills and insights add up to something more than the sum of their individual contributions. As such, educational excellence is more than basic reading, writing, and arithmetic; it is a capacity for working collaboratively with others and for taking responsibility for learning. Moreover, educational equity is a precondition for excellence in the post-industrial era, for collaboration means learning collaboratively with and from persons with varying interests, abilities, skills, and cultural perspectives, and taking responsibility for learning means taking responsibility for one's own learning and that of others. Ability grouping and tracking have no place in such a system because they reduce young peoples' capacities to learn from and collaborate with one another and work against developing a community of learners, a situation that is precluded unless unity and cooperation are the norm in schools.

The successful school is one that prepares young people to work responsibly and interdependently under conditions of uncertainty. It does this by promoting in its students a sense of social responsibility, an awareness of interdependency, and an appreciation of uncertainty. It achieves these things by developing its students' capacity for experiential learning through collaborative problem solving and reflective discourse within a community of learners. The successful school is one that produces cultivated citizens by providing all of its students with the experience of a meaningful education in a participatory setting. Given the emerging historical conditions and the fact that democracy is collaborative problem solving through reflective discourse within a community of learners, participatory school organization provides more than a way to reconcile the social goals of educational excellence and educational equity. It provides us with an opportunity to resume the critical project of American pragmatism in education and, thus, with another chance to save democracy from bureaucracy.